



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General Darrell McGraw Sues Three Individuals in Charitable Fund-Raising Scam

Defendants ripped-off hundreds of consumers by falsely representing that their organization used funds from the sale of computers to benefit autistic children.

Today, West Virginia Attorney General Darrell McGraw's Consumer Protection Division filed a lawsuit against William S. Terry and Herbert L. Terry, both of Sandy Hook, Kentucky, and Vicky Perdue of Proctorville, Ohio, for violating West Virginia consumer protection laws in the marketing and sale of personal computers and other electronic goods.

According to the complaint, the parties represented to consumers that they had started a charitable organization called Mikayla's Place that was affiliated with Autism Speaks, a Delaware charitable organization. The complaint further alleges that the defendants misrepresented to consumers they were raising money for a camp for autistic and other special needs children by selling laptop computers that had been donated by corporate sponsors and some federal and state agencies. In reality, the defendants were purchasing the computers at liquidation sales and surplus auctions. Moreover, neither the defendants nor Mikayla's Place were registered with the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office to solicit funds for a charity.

Attorney General McGraw stated that his office became aware of the scam when consumers began filing complaints with his Consumer Protection Division. Consumers complained that they had ordered laptop computers from the defendants because they were told the money was for a fundraiser for Mikayla's Place and Autism Speaks. The consumers were charged \$50.00 for each computer they ordered and were promised delivery within a certain period of time. Most consumers never received a computer. Many never received a refund.

"Consumers must be wary of anyone who contacts them raising funds for any charitable organization," warns Attorney General McGraw. "The law requires all charitable organizations and the people who solicit donations for them to register with the Secretary of State. Consumers should always contact the Secretary of State's office to ensure the organization is, in fact, a charity."

West Virginia consumers who purchased merchandise in connection with fund-raising for Mikayla's Place can file a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by calling the Consumer Protection Hotline, 1-800-368-8808, or by obtaining a complaint form at www.wvago.gov.

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